

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of enhancing a screen display of a gaming machine, the method including:

creating a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme;

creating a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a representation of a game play to provide for various combinations of the composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, the combinations resulting from each game play being indicated in the game screen by payoff indicators and defined by paylines across the reels so that each combination consists of one composite symbol from each reel, wherein the composite symbols overlie the background scene and at least one of the composite symbols is thematically linked to the background scene, and wherein each composite symbol comprises a carrier portion and a game symbol portion,

rendering at least the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the carrier portions, wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at least certain composite symbols define in combination a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable, and wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and

if a said winning combination occurs in a game play of the spinning reel game, following the spinning up of combinations on the reels, indicating in the game screen the composite symbols that formed the winning combination, wherein at least one said winning combination comprises at least one composite symbol having a carrier portion that has been rendered transparent.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 which includes rendering said carrier portions of said at least certain composite symbols transparent by software implementation.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 which includes setting said carrier portions of said at least certain composite symbols to an appropriate alpha channel value in an alpha channel range.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 which includes employing an objects based graphic system for development of the composite symbol with symbol portions of the composite symbol being rendered opaque.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 which includes creating a representation of a flashing composite symbol.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6 which includes placing a part of the background scene over the composite symbol and placing a flashing composite symbol animation on top of the part of the background scene to provide a flashing composite symbol.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6 which includes causing the composite symbol itself to be flashed on and off directly on top of the underlying part of the background scene so that the background scene remains visible and any background animations continue while the composite symbol flashes.

9. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine screen display which comprises:
a background scene for a spinning reel game, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme;

a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols, said symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a representation of a game play to provide for various combinations of the composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, the combinations resulting from each game play being indicated in the game screen by payline indicators and defined by paylines across the reels so that each combination consists of one composite symbol from each reel, and wherein the composite symbols overlie the background scene and at least one of the composite symbols is thematically linked to the background scene, and wherein each composite symbol comprises a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, at least the carrier portion of at least certain of the composite symbols being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed at least through the carrier portions, and wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at

least certain composite symbols define in combination a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable, and wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and

an indicator of any winning combination of composite symbols that occurs in a game play of the spinning reel game, wherein at least one said winning combination comprises at least one composite symbol having a carrier portion that has been rendered transparent.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 9 in which said carrier portion of each composite symbol is rendered transparent by an appropriate selection of alpha channel value in an alpha channel range.

12. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 9 which comprises a composite image with the composite symbols overlying the background scene.

13. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 12 which incorporates one or more animations.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 which includes providing an alpha channel setting which results in completely transparent carrier portions.

15. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 11 in which said carrier portion is rendered completely transparent.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of enhancing a screen display of a gaming machine, the method including:

creating a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme, the spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels;

creating a plurality of composite symbols to overlie the background scene, at least one of the composite symbols being thematically linked to the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a game play of the spinning reel game to provide for various combinations of composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol

comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end;

rendering the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed therethrough;

displaying a matrix of composite symbol positions on the screen with a periphery of the reels being provided by said carrier portions through which a substantial part of the underlying background scene is visible, the combinations resulting from each game play being indicated in the game screen by payoff indicators and defined by paylines through the matrix across the reels so that each combination consists of one composite symbol from each reel; and wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and

if a said winning combination occurs in a game play of the spinning reel game, following the spinning up of combinations on the reels, indicating in the game screen the composite symbols that formed the winning combination, wherein at least one said winning combination comprises at least one composite symbol having a carrier portion that has been rendered transparent.

17. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine screen display which comprises:

a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme, the spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels;

a plurality of composite symbols which overlie the background scene, at least one of the composite symbols being thematically linked to the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a game play to provide for various combinations of composite symbols, the combinations being defined by a plurality of paylines through the reels, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion with the composite symbols of each reel being arranged end-to-end, at least the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the carrier portions; wherein the background scene spans the video

representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and

payline indicators to indicate the combinations resulting from a game play; and

an indicator that indicates a winning combination of composite symbols that occur in a game play of the spinning reel game, wherein the at least one said winning combination comprises at least one composite symbol having a carrier portion that has been rendered transparent;

the display including a matrix of the composite symbols on the screen with a periphery of the reels being provided by the carrier portions within which periphery a substantial part of the underlying background scene is visible.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer program comprising instructions stored on a computer readable media implementing a spinning reel game when executed on a gaming machine, the spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, said instructions, when executed by the gaming machine causing the gaming machine to:

generate a background scene for said spinning reel game on a screen display of the gaming machine, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme, and

generate a plurality of composite symbols which overlie the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a game play under influence of the program to provide for various combinations of symbols the combinations being defined by a plurality of paylines through the reels and indicated in the game screen by payline indicators, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion with the composite symbols of each reel being arranged end-to-end, at least the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols being rendered transparent such that they define, in combination, in respect of each reel, a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and, wherein at least one of the composite symbols is thematically linked to the background scene, and

indicate a winning combination of composite symbols that occurs in a game play of the spinning reel game, wherein at least one said winning combination comprises at least one composite symbol having a carrier portion that has been rendered transparent.

19. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine having comprising a display and a game controller arranged to control images on the display, the game controller being arranged to play a spinning reel game comprising a plurality of spinning reels that are represented on the display in a video representation, each reel comprising a set of symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels in a game play to provide for various combinations of symbols, the combinations being defined by a plurality of paylines through the reels and indicated on the display by payline indicators, at least one of the combinations being a prize winning combination the occurrence of which is indicated on the display of the gaming machine following the spinning up of symbols on the reels, said display comprising:

a background scene for a game screen of said spinning reel game, the background scene being thematically linked to at least one of the symbols, and

wherein the symbols comprise composite symbols which overlie the background scene, each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, at least the carrier portion of at least certain of the composite symbols being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the carrier portions, at least one of the symbols having a transparent carrier portion forming a part of a winning combination, wherein the composite symbols form the symbols of the reels, and wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at least certain composite symbols define, in combination, a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, comprising rendering at least certain of entire composite symbols transparent so as to reveal a portion of the background scene coincident with the at least certain composite symbols.

21. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of Claim 9, wherein one or more of the game symbols of the at least certain composite symbols having transparent carrier portions are also transparent.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of generating images on a gaming machine display, the method comprising:

generating a background scene for a game scene of a spinning reel game, the background scene being indicative of at least one theme;

generating a representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols at least one being thematically linked to the background scene and including a transparent carrier portion and a game symbol portion, wherein said composite symbols are displayed to overlies said background scene and wherein said background scene is at least partially viewable through said carrier portions;

displaying the background scene and the representation of the plurality of spinning reels with at least one pay line identified by a payline indicator, game symbol portions displayed on said at least one pay line defining a winning or a losing outcome, and wherein the background scene spans the video representation of the spinning reels and does not form part of any said combinations of composite symbols, and

if winning outcome occurs, indicating the composite symbols that formed the winning outcome, wherein at least one winning outcome comprises at least one composite symbol having a transparent carrier portion.

23. (Currently Amended) The display method of Claim 22, wherein said transparent carriers of adjacent composite symbols cooperate to define a transparent reel overlying said background scene and wherein the background scene is viewable through said transparent reel.

24. (Currently Amended) The display method of Claim 22, further comprising highlighting the game symbol portion of any composite symbol on a pay line for a winning combination.

25. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of Claim 9, wherein the indicator comprises an animation of the composite symbols that defined the winning combination.